



OFFICE OF THE  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Mr Tony O'Shea  
Chairman  
Co-operatives Australia  
71 Franciscan Avenue  
FRANKSTON VIC 3199

29 SEP 2009

Dear Mr O'Shea

Thank you for your letter dated 15 September 2009 about the proposal for a United Nations-designated International Year of Co-operatives. Mr Smith has asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

The Australian Government welcomes the 2009 report of the UN Secretary-General on the role of co-operatives in development. The Third Committee of the UN General Assembly is yet to formally respond to the Secretary-General's report. Australia's formal position will be developed in consultation with other UN members. As you may be aware, previous resolutions on this issue have been consistently adopted by the Third Committee without a vote.

While Australia supports the positive role co-operatives play in social development, we have long-standing concerns about the proliferation of UN designated years. The primary reason for concern is the Government's objective of ensuring that the UN General Assembly's agenda remains as streamlined as possible and focused on key global challenges.

Thank you for bringing your views to the attention of the Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frances Adamson'.

Frances Adamson  
Chief of Staff